

Statement of Leslie V. Rowe
Ambassador-Designate to Mozambique
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

It is a great honor and privilege to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the Ambassador to the Republic of Mozambique. I appreciate the confidence of the President and Secretary Clinton in putting my name forward for your consideration. If confirmed, I look forward to working with this Committee and the Congress, in advancing U.S. interests and partnering with Mozambique to broaden its commitment to democracy and economic prosperity.

In our interconnected world, a democratic, peaceful and prosperous Mozambique serves American principles and interests. In my twenty six years as a Foreign Service Officer, I have served in a number of positions in the developing world -- in Africa, Asia, the Pacific and Latin America. I have seen first hand the important role that the United States can have in partnering with countries as they work to eradicate poverty and instability. My experience as Ambassador to Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu and as Deputy Chief of Mission in Nairobi, as well as my fluency in Portuguese, will enhance my effectiveness in assisting Mozambique to consolidate its successes, while seeking to further U.S. goals of peace and democracy.

The United States helped to broker the 1992 Peace Accords that ended 16 years of civil war. Our country remains a strong supporter of Mozambique's efforts to reinforce its democratic gains, and we commend the progress it has

achieved over the last two decades. On October 28, Mozambique held Presidential and parliamentary elections. Although the elections were peaceful, the exclusion of many opposition candidates from the electoral process on alleged technicalities was not a good sign in terms of the development of a strong multi-party democracy in Mozambique. Working constructively with the Government of Mozambique on strengthening democratic institutions, good governance, and the rule of law will be among my top priorities.

If confirmed, I will also work diligently with the Mozambican government on the transnational and regional issues most important to the United States, such as narcotrafficking and money laundering.

In macroeconomic terms, Mozambique has been a star, with an average growth rate of 6-8% per year over the last ten years. The policies that led to that impressive economic growth garnered the support of international financial institutions and other donors. But many of the financial gains are unevenly distributed, leaving too many, including the country's youth, in poverty, and creating the conditions for potential social instability.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of U.S. assistance to Mozambique. As the largest bilateral donor to the country, the United States plays a vital role in assisting Mozambique in its efforts to invest in its people, especially women and girls, and thereby raise the standard of living in the country. Our development assistance programs will continue to be an important component of our bilateral relationship. If confirmed, I will partner with Mozambique to expand its trade and foreign investment, strengthen the agricultural sector, and increase job creation and entrepreneurship. I will seek to ensure that our programs strengthen transparency in extractive industries and assist Mozambique as it modernizes and builds its infrastructure. I have a special interest in working with Mozambique to expand educational opportunities for all of its citizens and increase our educational

exchange programs. I pledge to coordinate with the government of Mozambique and our bilateral and multilateral partners to ensure that our assistance meets shared development goals.

Unfortunately, Mozambique has a 16 percent HIV/AIDS prevalence rate, and malaria accounts for half the deaths of children under five. These are tragic impediments to Mozambique's social and economic development. Over the last few years, I have had the privilege of working with our highly committed embassy teams in Kenya and Papua New Guinea on HIV/AIDS programs that have saved thousands of lives. If confirmed, one of my primary goals will be to continue the successful U.S. programs that help Mozambique train health care professionals, treat the infected, and spearhead prevention of HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.

Mozambique is at a crucial juncture in its democratic history. I welcome the opportunity to take on the challenges of this position and pledge to further strengthen our excellent bilateral relationship with the Government of Mozambique. If confirmed, I will do my utmost to protect Americans and American interests. I will also reach out to help all of the people of Mozambique to prosper and benefit from peace and stability in their country.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.